Book Reviews / Comptes rendus

Roberts, J., & Cairns, K. (1999). *School Children with HIV/AIDS.* Calgary, Alberta: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.

Reviewed by: Thomas Kerr, University of Victoria

While there is an increasing number of children living with HIV/AIDS in schools, little has been written about the school experience of these children and their families. The authors of *School Children with HIV/AIDS* have made a timely and vital contribution to our knowledge about the topic with this summary of a study completed in conjunction with the HIV/AIDS Program at the Hospital for Sick Children (Toronto).

The authors interviewed 17 parents and caregivers of children with HIV/AIDS and applied a qualitative methodology as a means of identifying salient categories and clusters of experience. While the authors address various topics and issues, the two primary objectives were to: "(a) identify the perceptions and experiences of the parents regarding interactions with the schools which have had an impact on the child and family's quality of life, and (b) clarify how schools can best prepare to meets the needs of children with HIV/AIDS and their families, and accommodate and support them" (p. 31).

This 108-page book is organized according to the format of the study, which includes a review of the related literature, a methods, results, and discussion section. The authors have also included an excellent resource list addressing a variety of topics including paediatric HIV/AIDS. The writing style is clear and easy to read, and while there is some medical terminology included, the terms are explained in simple language and are easy to understand.

The literature review describes the complex and unpredictable impact of HIV/AIDS on the physical, psychological, and social functioning of children, and the corresponding implications for school experience. This chapter also addresses the issues of privacy and safe school environments. After describing their research approach, founded on an in-depth analysis of parent and caregiver interviews, the authors present their findings. The results section contains a highly effective and engaging analysis of the caregivers' views, a number of direct quotes, and a list of parent recommendations for schools. The analysis is organized into four main categories (Socialization, Empowerment, Well-Being, and Satisfaction) and a number of related clusters and themes. The discussion section compares HIV/AIDS with other chronic illnesses, and discusses how HIV/AIDS is unique in its impact on the psychological, social, and educational functioning of children. This chapter concludes with the authors' recommendations for school systems, recommendations that cover a surprisingly diverse array of issues including disclosure, communication with parents, presentation of information concerning HIV/AIDS, outbreaks of illnesses within schools, and HIV/AIDS policy. These recommendations alone constitute a valuable resource for all schools.

The authors point out that there are increasing numbers of children with HIV/AIDS in schools, but that because parents often do not disclose the health status of their children, school staff are usually unaware of their presence. The book helps address this phenomenon by offering recommendations that provide a guideline for developing effective policy, even in those instances where disclosure has not taken place.

The authors do an exemplary job of documenting the impact of HIV/AIDS on the quality of life of the entire family. Therefore, while *School Children with HIV/AIDS* may be particularly invaluable for administrators, teachers, counsellors, and psychologists working in schools, it is also a useful resource for any helping professional working with children and families outside of the school setting.

Niemeyer, R. (2001). *Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss.* Washington DC.: American Psychological Association

Reviewed by: Ann Laverty, University of Calgary

Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss offers a refreshing look at bereavement and loss studies. Traditionally, work in these areas has focused on symptoms, stage theories, and different types of loss experiences. This text does not rehash that work, but rather describes current conceptualizations and speculates on future directions. Robert Neimeyer and over two dozen contributors provide complex perspectives on loss as a meaning-making process and strengthen the link between counselling theory and the experience of loss.

Part One of the text presents arguments for the need to re-conceptualize psychoanalytic and stage models of loss to account for postmodern realities. Issues addressed include mourning as unique rather than universal, potentially positive functions of continuing bonds with the deceased, and the need to consider loss as both sad and growth producing. Careful attention is given to meaning-making and cognitive processes used to guide these endeavours.

The second part of the book examines personal and interpersonal domains of grieving with chapters addressing death of a child, dynamics of family grieving, and losses when a disabled child dies. The authors critique views of grieving as primarily individual and they address issues of societal norms and the importance of coping strategies, including social support.

Part Three is completely devoted to the potentially positive outcomes of loss, with special consideration given to healing from trauma. Through exploring individual difference and coping styles, reviewing empirical research which supports functional aspects of loss, and addressing spiritual and life meaning issues, this section presents new possibilities for more comprehensively conceptualizing loss.

Part Four of the book thoroughly explores loss through a narrative theory lens. Exploring issues of counsellor self-care, the role of personal and cultural stories, and the use of narrative approaches in research and counselling, these writers support knowledge generation through the power of metaphor, reflexivity, and storytelling.